tion is often readily produced by this mineral, which may have led to the opinion of its having caused the presence of the albumen in the fluid. The application of blisters appears sometimes to cause albuminous urine, probably from irritating the kidneys, and we know that hæmaturia also is at times thus produced.—*Lancet*, Dec. 2d, 1848.

MATERIA MEDICA AND PHARMACY.

9. *Action of Calomel on the Liver.* By M. Michea.—When calomel is administered in purgative doses, the stools become more liquid, and at the same time acquire a characteristic green colour. This green colour is usually, at least by English practitioners, held to indicate the presence of bile, and the experiments of our author tend to show that the opinion is well founded. Calomel stools have been analysed by Golding Bird (*Med. Gaz.*, Sept. 1845), who found only slight traces of bile; and by Siebert of Erlangen, who failed to obtain any indication of that secretion. Dr. Bird concluded from his experiments, that the green colour is due to an altered condition of the colouring matter of the blood.

M. Michéa has examined the feces under four different conditions:—

1. Feces passed by a healthy individual, no drug having been administered.—In six specimens no bile was found.

2. Green stools rendered by individuals suffering from gastro-intestinal irritation, no drug having been administered.—The presence of bile was indicated in one only of three cases examined.

3. Calomel stools. This drug was exhibited to eight individuals, and the alvine dejections presented a green colour in four. In these the presence of bile was readily demonstrated. These stools showed also the presence of a large quantity of albumen, which the author supposes to be derived from the bile.

4. Stools obtained by the exhibition of saline and other non-mercurial purgatives.—These never or very rarely present the green colour or the viscosity peculiar to calomel stools. Five specimens were examined; neither biliverdin nor albumen was found.

The author prefers the nitric acid as a test for bile. Added to an animal liquid containing this secretion, a characteristic reaction ensues; the fluid becomes first green, then bluish-violet, and finally assumes a red colour. These changes occur within the space of a few seconds.

From these experiments it may be concluded that calomel stools contain an excess of bile, as nitric acid reveals in them the existence of two principles of that secretion, biliverdin and albumen.—*Monthly Retrospect*, Dec. 1848, from *L'Union Médicale*, Oct. 21 and 23, 1848.

10. *An Effect of Opium, upon which sufficient stress has not hitherto been laid.*—Opium increases the circulation of the skin, and diminishes that of the mucous membranes. A person who has taken a full dose of opium at night, will, amongst its other effects, feel himself the warmer for at least twenty-four hours afterwards. I am acquainted with a gentleman who has met with considerable success in his practice on indolent old ulcers, and one part of his treatment consists in his giving his patient a grain of opium thrice daily; this is done upon the principle of stimulating the capillary circulation of the part. In that form of deafness which is attended with tinnitus, and appears to consist in a congested state of the mucous membrane of the Eustachian tube and tympanum, I have often successfully prescribed opium with a view of increasing the cutaneous circulation, and diminishing that of the mucous membranes.

An old lady suffered from a severe attack of influenza, the poison of which seemed principally to operate upon the Schneiderian and bronchial mucous membranes. For four years afterwards she constantly suffered from an obstruction in both nostrils, attended with so profuse a secretion of thin mucous fluid, as to oblige her to use four or five handkerchiefs in the course of a day, and the least exposure of the lungs or surface to a cold atmosphere, brought on an asthmatic attack, which was accompanied with a copious frothy expectoration. Though she could smell

nothing which was presented to her nostrils, she was troubled with an offensive putrid odour, which she imagined was always present, whilst the sense of taste had become so obtuse, that she could neither distinguish tea from water, nor salt from soda. I had been acquainted with her for a long time, and had frequently prescribed various remedies without success, as a great many other practitioners also had done. The mucous membrane of both nostrils was swelled, redder than natural, and so acutely sensitive, that she could not bear the slightest touch with my probe. These symptoms and appearances might have induced me to the opinion of the case being one of malignant polypus; but though the disease had existed so long without any amendment, it had, on the other hand, made no advance; and besides this circumstance, the history of the case, and the co-existence of the thoracic affection, were not in favour of this supposition. One morning, whilst sitting near her, and witnessing the constant annoyance from which she was suffering, I remembered that, whilst I was attending her for an acute disease, by which she was confined to her bed, she mentioned that her head and chest symptoms had suddenly become much better, for she had barely wet a single handkerchief, and fancied she had perceived the savoury odour of a stew, which was being prepared in the kitchen. I paid no attention to this circumstance at the time, especially as, a few days later, I noticed that she again seemed as bad as ever. But now, and it was at least a twelvemonth afterwards, a bright thought struck me; I remembered that, at the time she spoke of this amendment, she was taking opium in considerable quantities, for a spasmodic pain in the bowels. My opinions on the effects of opium, which I have above detailed, were already formed, and I determined upon having recourse to it in this instance. I laughingly told her that a brilliant idea had come into my head, and that I now knew what would give her relief. The good old soul shook her head doubtingly, and said that she would give me fifty pounds if it did. (She never paid me, if she meant it.) Desirous of concealing the nature of the remedy, I prescribed the Pilula Styracis Composita, in five grain doses, every night at bed-time. Some improvement was apparent in the course of a very few days, and it became continually progressive. In two months she ceased to wet more than a single handkerchief daily, and had even some return of the sense of smell and taste, whilst she had now become comparatively indifferent to a low atmospheric temperature; for although during the whole of the previous winters she had been obliged to confine herself to one room, or to move through the passages with a shawl, or a respirator, before her mouth, during the next cold season she wandered about the house, without finding any precaution necessary. She always had expressed herself with extreme confidence of the benefit she had received, and, as a proof of her faith, I may mention the great glee with which, during her last illness, she received the intelligence that I allowed her to have one of her old pills; those pills, she believed, would cure every malady. She died of another complaint, seven months after the commencement of this treatment, but I believe that the improvement in her head and chest symptoms had been progressive to the last.

Opium-eaters generally complain of feeling cold and shrunk up, when they are deprived of their habitual stimulus. These effects of opium on the mucous membrane are well illustrated in the following passage, which is taken from the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater:"—

"I must mention one symptom which never failed to accompany any attempt to renounce opium,—viz., violent sternutation. This now became exceedingly troublesome, sometimes lasting for two hours at a time, and recurring at least two or three times a day. It is remarkable, also, that during the whole period of years through which I had taken opium, I had never once caught cold, not even the slightest cough, but now a violent cold attacked me, and a cough soon after."—*Prov. Med. and Surg. Journ.*, Nov. 15, 1848.

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11. *Physiological Action of the Iodide of Potassium.* By MM. Boys de Loury and Costilhes.—In an article on the therapeutic action of different medicines used at St. Lazare, in the treatment of syphilis, these gentlemen remark that they have paid particular attention to the effects produced by this medicine, and that they occur in the following order:—

1. *Action on the Intestinal Canal.*—The first day, the dose being 0·75 gramme